



RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 10, 2009

MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, September 10, 2009, 8:00 AM at the City of Tucson Community Services Center,
310 N. Commerce Park Loop, Tucson, Arizona.**

RPAC Members in Attendance

- Amy McCoy, Sonoran Institute
- Paul Green, Tucson Audubon Society
- Tim Johnson, At-Large Member
- Greg Shinn, Southern Arizona Home Builders Association
- Diana Hadley, Santa Cruz River Alliance
- Amanda Best, Metropolitan Pima Alliance
- Karolyn Kendrick, Arizona Native Plant Society
- Matt Clark, Defenders of Wildlife
- Chad Kolodisner, At-large Member
- Joy Lyndes, At-large Member

Ex-officio Members in Attendance

- Orlanthia Henderson, Town of Sahuarita
- David Jacobs, Arizona State Land Dept.

Staff in Attendance

- Ann Audrey, Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development (OCSD)
- Leslie Liberti, OCSD
- Nicole Urban-Lopez, OCSD
- Jamie Brown, OCSD
- Laura Burge, Ward 6
- Diana Rhoades, Ward 1
- Holly Lachowicz, Ward 3
- Viola Romero-Wright, City Attorney's Office
- Joe Linville, PDSD
- Julie Parizak Parks and Rec
- Howard Dutt, Parks and Rec

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call

A quorum was established and the meeting commenced at 8:10 a.m.

2. Updates

- Ann Audrey reported that staff is in the process of obtaining Mayor and Council approval for the reappointment of existing RPAC members whose terms have expired, the new member to represent Tucson Association of Realtors (Damion Alexander), and the new ex officio member to represent Pima Association of Governments (Claire Zucker).

3. Discussion of proposed changes in riparian ordinance and development standard, discussion of results of subcommittee meeting, and possible motions on scheduling additional subcommittee meeting and additional RPAC meetings

- Staff summarized that the RPAC has proposed that trails that are identified in the City's new Trails Master Plan and that are parallel to a wash should be considered necessary development which means they won't count when encroachment is calculated. An outstanding question is whether developers should have to pay to mitigate for the trails (this is currently required). Another outstanding question is whether Parks and Recreation Department (Parks and Rec Department) feels the trails should be located within the floodplain or whether they can be relocated outside the floodplain.
- Howard Dutt from the City Parks and Rec Department reported that the current Trails Master Plan focused on trails located on the periphery of the City. The current revision to the Trails Master Plan focuses on interconnections between trails and trail segments within the City and to the existing trails on the periphery of the City.
- The Trails Master Plan update began in 2007.
- Considerations included: interconnections, access, urban trail facilities, and consistency.
- Definitions:
 - Trails- unpaved, 8 ft. wide
 - Backcountry trails- unpaved, 3 ft. wide
 - Paths- paved, 12 ft.
 - River Parks- path and trail on both sides of river
 - Greenways- path and trail in greenway corridor
- Schedule- revisions will continue through September. A public meeting will be held in October, and the City and County Parks and Rec Commissions will review the Plan in November and December.
- Parks and Rec Staff clarified that the jurisdictions maintain the trails whether there is an easement or dedicated land.
- It was asked why a 50 ft. easement is required for a 12 ft. wide trail. Staff explained that 12 ft. is needed for the paved path plus 8 ft. for the trail. An additional buffer is needed so the trail can meander to create a park-like feel.
- Concerns were raised over the potential to destroy riparian habitat by requiring a buffer. Staff explained that if a trail goes through a riparian area then it should still be mitigated for.
- Staff reported that there was a common theme at the public meetings that these areas in the urban core should be utilized and accessible by the public for recreational use.
- It was asked how wide the buffer is on either side of the trail and what happens to the habitat in the buffers? Staff reported that they include a 2 ft. clear zone for safety reasons.
- Staff commented that there are many factors that determine the locations of trails, including grading, existing development, and existing riparian habitat.
- Staff will follow-up to find out if there are new standards for maintenance practices.
- Walt Rogers provided a presentation on the Arroyo Chico Urban Greenway, summarized below.
- The two purposes for the development of the Arroyo Chico Urban Greenway are: to connect to the regional county trail system and to provide interconnections within the urban core.

- The dominant species in the wash is Bermuda grass and the predominant tree is the Mexican palo verde.
- This wash has an existing 15-20 ft. utility road that can be utilized for the new trail.
- 3-5 ft. of landscaping is included in the plan along the backside of the existing residences.
- The greenway will be 17 ft. wide.
- They are borrowing 20 ft. of land from Robison School so encroaching on the wash won't be necessary.
- Parks and Rec Staff was asked whether trails are considered necessary development and, if an easement is required, whether the developer must pay for the mitigation. Staff commented that it is considered necessary development and mitigation is required from the developer. The developer pays for the trail and for mitigation. With an easement, the City would take over maintenance of the property.
- Parks and Rec Staff commented that the location of a trail is negotiable.
- Staff clarified that they might continue to ask for trail connections that are not included in the Trails Master Plan.
- A comment was made that there is no incentive for infill development. Removing the requirement for mitigation for trails required by Parks and Rec would help add an incentive to infill development. Parks and Rec Staff commented that often the trails are an amenity that attracts people to the area, creating demand for the development.
- It was commented that it is disturbing that the trails encroach into wash habitat, even if the habitat is currently degraded.
- It was asked what percentages of Floodplain, WASH and ERZ washes have a planned trail? Parks and Rec Staff reported that a large number of these washes include a planned or existing trail.
- It was commented that requiring developers to dedicate land for a trail and then dedicate additional land for mitigation of the trail is a double impact.
- It was asked why developers have to mitigate for a City required trail? It was suggested that if a developer cannot mitigate for the trail onsite, then the mitigation requirement should be waived, and that landscaping on the trail be counted as mitigation.
- It was suggested that staff work to avoid habitat as much as possible within the 50 ft. trail corridor and maximize the quality of new trail plantings. If thorned vegetation is removed, the understory should be replaced with other functional plants.
- Next, OCSD Staff distributed copies of a summary of the major changes proposed to the riparian ordinances and development standard. A discussion followed of the proposed changes. **A summary of the discussion is included in the middle column of the document REVISED DRAFT 9-14-09; MAJOR CHANGES PROPOSED TO RIPARIAN ORDINANCES AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARD, INCORPORATING COMMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER 10 RPAC MEETING** (attached to these minutes).
- Motion was made by Joy Lyndes to allow the Riparian Ordinance Review subcommittee to continue to meet as needed. Motion was seconded by Greg Shinn. Motion was amended to include a limit of six members on the subcommittee. Motion passed by a voice vote of 10-0.

4. Future Agenda Items

- Report from the Town of Oro Valley on their riparian preservation-related ordinances.

5. Call to the Audience

6. Adjournment at 10:24 a.m.